

Asthma Society of Ireland Report

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The Asthma Society of Ireland, UCC and Novartis Ireland launch significant investigation into wellbeing of Irish adults with asthma.



The Asthma Society of Ireland, kindly supported by Novartis Ireland, launched the results of a significant investigation into the wellbeing and mental health of Irish adults with Asthma at the National Gallery in Dublin. The study revealed that 61% of those with Asthma in Ireland have admitted experiencing depressive symptoms in the last four weeks while 1 in 5 (20%) revealed they were unable to work due to their health. The study also revealed that 82% of respondents felt their physical health was also limited as a result of their Asthma.

6% of those studied admitted to feeling depressed “most of the time” with 61% agreeing that depressive symptoms were present. 10% of those surveyed also outlined that they felt “much more limited” in comparison to others their age. More than half (54%) said they “felt despair” over their health at some stage, with 14% outlining they felt that way most, or all of the time.

Caitriona Kennedy has had Asthma since she was a baby and commented “I am really pleased that Asthma is now being taken seriously. I felt nobody understood the constant exhaustion Asthma brings; it is only in very recent years that this has been spoken about. I was embarrassed having Asthma as a child and hid it. I spent most of my childhood in and out of Temple Street Hospital. I couldn’t keep up with my peers. One of the main

symptoms for me was a severe lack of sleep, which has far reaching effects on your life. I was tired and irritable all the time.”

Comment from Sharon Cosgrove, CEO, Asthma Society of Ireland “The vision of Healthy Ireland is one where everyone can enjoy their physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. This study highlights the need to make this vision a reality for people with Asthma. We need full implementation of the National Programme for Asthma without further delay. People with Asthma should have the best possible care supported by appropriate interventions to help address the psychological and wellbeing issues highlighted in the study. For support and information call the Asthma Adviceline on 1850 44 54 64 or talk to your GP” she added.

Comment from Jerry Buttimer T.D and Chair of the Oireachtas Health Committee “This excellent study dispels the myth that ‘Asthma is not a serious condition’. It unearths new facts about the emotional trauma Asthma can bring and the severe effects it can have on quality of life. The patient voice is loud & clear in this study. Its findings provide a basis for improving the life experience of those with Asthma while, at the same time, delivering financial and social savings for us all.”

Comment from Jennifer Heaney, Head of Respiratory, Novartis Ireland. “For most people who don’t have Asthma, we think only of the physical symptoms however this research highlights the impact that it can have on general wellbeing. We need to look at Asthma holistically and treat it accordingly. Novartis is delighted to have supported this important research and look forward to continued collaboration with the Asthma Society to help improve the lives of patients who are suffering from Asthma in Ireland.”

The loss of productivity in the workforce and at school due to Asthma related illness is 12 days per adult, and 10 days per child per year in Ireland (Manning et al. 2007), and at a cost to the exchequer of €2,737 per hospital admission (Health Service Executive 2009). Despite the availability of comprehensive guidelines on Asthma management (Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention, Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) 2015. Available from: <http://www.ginasthma.org/>), morbidity rates in adults continue to rise, with worrying levels of control having been highlighted by the REALISE study (Price et al. 2014).

The Health and Wellbeing Study was commissioned by the Asthma Society of Ireland, Novartis Ireland and UCC. The objectives of the study were to investigate how adults living with Asthma in Ireland perceive their health and wellbeing; explore how severely the disease affects the everyday life of adults living with Asthma in Ireland; investigate whether there is a relationship between the concepts of health and wellbeing in those living with Asthma and distinguish how perceptions of health and perceptions of wellbeing affect one another.

For further information log onto www.asthma.ie

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